



FEMA

Fact Sheet

Emergency Communications and Digital Television Conversion

From April 16 to June 12, 2009, emergency television broadcasts, previously transmitted via analog television, will be broadcast via digital television (DTV), along with all television broadcasts. Despite this change, the nation's EAS will continue to function in the event of a national emergency.

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is the national public warning system that requires broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio service (SDARS) providers and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service providers to provide the communications capability to the President to address the American public during a national emergency.

FEMA, in conjunction with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service ([NOAA](#)), activates the EAS at the federal level. In the event of an incident, the President has sole responsibility for determining when the EAS will be activated at the national level, and has delegated this authority to the director of FEMA.

Congress has mandated that after June 12, 2009, full-power television broadcast stations must transmit only digital signals, and may no longer transmit analog signals. Congress recently adopted the Short-Term Analog Flash and Emergency Readiness Act ("Analog Nightlight Act") that requires the FCC to develop and implement a program for analog TV service after June 12, 2009, to provide "public safety information" and "DTV transition information" to viewers who may not have obtained the necessary equipment to receive digital broadcasts after the transition date.

Those viewers who have not made a digital television conversion by June 12, 2009, should consult the FCC's website at www.fcc.gov or www.dtv.gov call 1-888-225-5322 to determine which analog broadcasters may have been authorized to broadcast safety and conversion information during this period.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

